

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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GOVERNOR BARBOUR ANNOUNCES MISSISSIPPI'S
"STAY ALERT. STAY ALIVE." HURRICANE AWARENESS CAMPAIGN

BILOXI, Mississippi – Local, state and federal officials today joined Governor Haley Barbour in announcing an eight-week informational campaign to help make Mississippians more aware of how to protect themselves as the 2006 hurricane season approaches.

"Katrina, the worst natural disaster in American history, taught many lessons," Governor Barbour said at an event marking the start of the campaign. "One of them is that even with all the information and assistance that is available, there really is no substitute for awareness and self-help, especially in the days before a hurricane is predicted to hit.

"Experience tells us that advance preparation is the key. The 'Stay Alert. Stay Alive' campaign is designed to give people the information they need to make good decisions in advance so they can be prepared to successfully face whatever nature throws at us this year," he said.

The awareness campaign is a partnership of various state agencies, non-profit organizations and the U.S. Department of Homeland Security's Federal Emergency Management Agency. Each of the organizations will combining their hurricane awareness efforts so that all Mississippi residents, government agencies and businesses are prepared for the 2006 season, which officially begins June 1.

During the campaign the agencies and organizations will focus on a variety of preparedness themes, including family disaster plans, businesses, travel trailers, evacuation routes, volunteer efforts, insurance, health issues and mental health needs.

FEMA and the Mississippi Emergency Management Agency will also print door-hangers that FEMA Community Relations team members will place on the doors of the FEMA travel trailers and mobile homes. The door hangers feature disaster preparedness tips, remind tenants of an evacuation survey phone line and urge residents not to tow or move their travel trailer during an evacuation.

"As we prepare for the 2006 hurricane season, we face some very different challenges," MEMA Director Robert Latham said. "More than 100,000 of our citizens now live in excess of 36,000 temporary travel trailers in our state making them more vulnerable than ever before. We urge our citizens to sit down with their families and develop a plan that includes early evacuation and a clear destination, a family communications plan, and supplies to support extended stays away from home. Citizens are also reminded to leave FEMA owned trailers behind."

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